

THE WASATCH JUNCTION

NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN SPIKE CHAPTER

Railway & Locomotive Historical Society

2019

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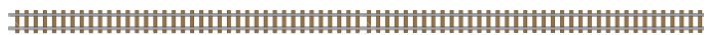
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**Next Two Meetings: May 18, 2019 at 12 noon, Two Bit Cafe, 25th street
June 15 2019 at 12 noon, Two Bit Cafe, 25th street**

Meeting Notes:

Meetings have been sporadic because of alternate Saturday activities while we're locked out of the shop. Our main discussion revolved around our ongoing dispute with the City of Ogden over gaining access to the shop once again. The City maintains that it wants to gain ownership of the 223 from the state but there are reports from some individuals that the City is dragging its feet and not giving much priority to this.

Hopefully with the completion of the Golden Spike 150 celebrations, the City can get back to focussing on other matters which may include the 223.



2019 R&LHS Convention

by Lee Witten

The annual meeting and convention of the R&LHS is now history. There's no official assessment of its success but some of

the members expressed to chapter members that they enjoyed it. Chairman Steve will have more comments regarding the convention in his message.

The convention occurred in the milieu of Ogden and Northern Utah's big sesquicentennial celebrations of the Golden Spike. Our convention activities were largely determined by these celebrations.

The arrival of Big Boy 4014 was a major event and brought out thousands of the curious and avid rail fans from all over



the world. New Zealand, Australia, England, Germany and China just to name a few. The excitement about the whole community was palpable.

Our convention headquarters was the Hilton Gardens Inn right in the middle of Ogden within walking distance of most venues. We had charter buses that transported us to most of the distant places and few spots in Ogden to relieve the walking of some of our members.

Registration went well but some of our members got caught up in the national problem of cancelled air flights and other hazards that delayed arrival in Ogden. The final member that was registered missed the first two days because of cancelled flights. But he was able to at least enjoy the festivities at the Golden Spike and the trip to the Heber Valley Railroad. More on that below.



The breakfast meeting on May 9th was held at the Hilton and went well with a full breakfast buffet and a one hour meeting ending at 9:a.m as planned. Members then were on their own the rest of the day to take part in Ogden's activities at the museum and street fair on 25th street.

The main event occurred on the rails just south of the museum and was put on by the Union Pacific Railroad. A large viewing area had been prepared which could have held 18,000 people standing. However much fewer than that actually came. No estimate of the number has been announced to our knowledge. Nevertheless there was a sizable gathering and plenty of UP VIPs as well as Ogden's Mayor, the Governor and congressional representatives. Large video screens displayed a UP promotional video of the 844

which was already in position. The Big Boy remained "off stage" out of site until it was called in by radio.

It steamed in majestically and the 844 and 4014 were almost nose to nose leaving space for the stage in between. The program lasted approximately one hour and the crowds moved on to other activities in the city.



On day 3 of the convention, May 10th, we had two charter buses to transport the 107 members to the Golden Spike National Park. (it was officially named a Park at the celebration). The reported estimate was 15,000 people at the visitors area. Traffic was backed up 11 miles when we arrived but we got there just before the program began.

We had reserved seating which was nice to have someplace to sit but unfortunately, the topography of where we had seats was below the grade that the spur track was on between us and the where the program was going on. People were lined up along the track so all we could see from a seated position was the backs of people and only the sound of the programs could be heard.



Many of the members jockeyed for positions elsewhere and managed to see much of the program. Or we could walk around the grounds and visit display tents with vendors or informational exhibits. There were ample food wagons and even a beer stand in case the packaged lunches we brought from the Hilton wasn't enough.



The program ended around 1:30 and members were asked to return to the buses for the trip back to Ogden.



Some members elected to visit the 223 shop at the Union Station. The City of Ogden had granted the Golden Spike Chapter to have tours for 2 days during the festivities at the Station. There was also the opportunity to walk along Track #1 and see the Big Boy at the other end. It had been turned on the wye and was coupled with the 844 in position to leave on Sunday morning for Cheyenne.



In the evening, members assembled at The Monarch which was a former parking garage for the Bigelow Hotel in the 1920's. The building has been put to many uses, auto repair, auto sales, restaurants and even simply abandoned. A new owner is repurposing the structure to a multi-use facility including art studios, large group events and a restaurant.



We enjoyed a catered BBQ dinner consisting of beef brisket, pork, baked beans, potato salad and corn bread. I only heard good things about the quality of the food.

A cash bar had been set up but there were some complaints as to the price of the drinks. It was higher than most other convention events we attended. But the overall experience of this dinner was positive.

Our final day, May 11, turned out to be something quite different from what we expected. We traveled an hour and a half to the little city of Heber in a beautiful valley near Park City. The

NRHS had chartered a train with the Heber Valley Railroad. They provided 100 tickets for our chapter so we were part of the 400 aboard the train.

Members picked up a box lunch before boarding the train. It left the station on time at 10:pm but about 1000 yards out at a street crossing, the train suddenly lurched and shook to a stop! Some of us on the left side could look out and see police cars arrive and traffic being redirected. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5LM80n2fGw>



Finally an NRHS member walked through the train with the announcement that the locomotive and first car, Business Car #100, had derailed and they are trying to get them back up. They



would not let us off the train so we sat there, most ate their box lunches, and a young lady came through playing her fiddle for entertainment.

After 2 hours it was announced that they could not move the train and the trip was cancelled. Fortunately the buses were right across the street so they pulled up alongside the train and we returned to Ogden much earlier than expected.



About the only positive thing a bunch of rail fans could glean from this is that they can check off their bucket list the experience of being on a train that derailed. We have a "war story" we can tell.

Back in Ogden there was time to simply rest up or return to the Union Station and 25th street for a last look at the Big Boy and tour the 223 shop, and museum Heritage Festival.

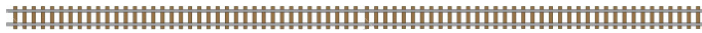
The final activity was the combined banquet at the Eccles Conference



center. For the first time the R&LHS, NRHS, UPHS and SPH&TS met together. 700 of us enjoyed a social hour, banquet of either prime rib, chicken or vegetarian meals. Each president of the organization gave some welcome remarks and the keynote speaker, John Gray, Retired SP/UP Manager, who gave an interesting presentation about how the SP rose and declined to eventually be incorporated into the UP corporation.

The only snag of the evening was when I received a phone call from the bus driver who was supposed to pick up some of our members for the banquet. He had an accident and would be delayed. I didn't know how I could contact them about this. Fortunately one of the members called me and I explained the problem and to just wait. They got there in good time. The bus driver had to call in another bus.

Some final thoughts personally. I had arranged for the buses and the food at the hotel and set up the registration table, and monitored the bus schedule to make sure things happened according to plan, but of course didn't do all of this myself. I appreciated having the Chapter members help with registration, hosting the buses and being at the shop, giving tours. Also a special thanks to Steve Jones our chairman for all he did and the support he gave me. He and I worked closely together and with the national convention chairman John Atherton, who kept us in sync with the national officers. It was stressful at times but now that its over, I'm happy that it went well and I was able to enjoy it despite the tension of being a host. Our chapter, small as it is, provided a good experience for our national organization.



Chairman's Message:

I thought the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the driving of the golden spike and the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad was over Saturday night when I attended the joint banquet with the R&LHS, Union Pacific Historical Society, Southern Pacific Historical and Technical Society, and the National Railway and Historical Society where about 900 people were in attendance. The ballroom at the Eccles Conference Center here in Ogden, UT was packed.

Then, I had a special treat. I was lying in bed Sunday morning half-awake when I heard the whistles of the 4014 Big Boy and 844 Living Legend as they were leaving Ogden for their trip to Evanston and then home to Cheyenne.

Thanks to the R&LHS National team for all the support and guidance provided to enable us to host this fantastic event, to The Monarch for their hospitality as the venue for our Friday night BBQ, and to Smokey's for the great food and service. Lee will go into more details about the event.

Your support encouraged Ogden City to offer a short term agreement that enabled us to offer tours, raise funds, and provide education during the Spike 150 events. Now that the celebrations are over we are back to square one continuing the lockout and several months where there has been NO restoration work done on the 223. Please consider making a donation to the Golden Spike Chapter to help us offset the legal costs of this effort.

Our public outreach activities are working. TV Station KSL did a segment on our project. The Imagination Company is doing a documentary on our project. Multiple organizations and individuals in the community have contributed to funding this documentary. Please take the time to look at the fantastic results we are seeing at <http://save223.com> to see for yourself.

I received a message and several phone calls from Patrick Harvey. His Great-Grandfather was the supervisor at Grant locomotive works between 1872 and 1875. Patrick shared a huge amount of information about those times which we are in the process of organizing for presentation. Then, when he visited the Trainman's building during the open house he presented us with a book that cataloged the equipment manufactured by Grant. The icing on the cake was that it included a photo of 223! Patrick, thank you for your generosity!

A short while ago we found that the Utah Division of State History has a large collection of artifacts relating to the 223 locomotive <https://heritage.utah.gov/apps/history/findaids/C01583/C1583.xml#a9>. We are working with them to schedule a visit to get digital copies of this information to further document the history of 223 and as backup information for our fundraising efforts.

Our mission of seeing the 223 restored to operation and being involved with all of the other restoration and railroad heritage activities here at Ogden Union Station takes both commitment and money. I ask each and every one of you to get involved with helping the Golden Spike Chapter save the D&RGW 223.

Become active in the organization and help keep that whistle blowin'.

